Har. 2314 at 2 Monksdene – Northwick Park Rd
Harrow
Middlesex

Dearest René Monday Morning, June 19th 1967

I was overjoiced as our old mate Tap
old cock might have written when I went
to the letter-rack in the hall here to see if I
had any mail, to find an envelope with yr
hand-writing on it. William Cookson told me
some days back that he has sent you your copy
but knowing what the bloody mails are like I did
not expect you to have got it so soon — or
at least not soon enough to have gone through
it. Yes, I feel *very* grateful Willm C. for
bringing that issue or rather continuation of issues of
Agenda out. He's worked damned hard on
the thing — he has to do it all himself — I
mean all the endless writing to chaps etc., ect., &
more or less stand over the printers to see that
they get the stuff as right as possible. We had to
have some of the blocks for the illustrations made
four times to get them at all right. I must
say they were very patient about that. But
you know how appallingly difficult & *unbelievably*
chancy the reproduction of my sort of stuff
is. — virtually impossible, but, to quote the
redoubtable Auntie Vi, "Fair's fair & right's right,"
I think they've not made, by & large,
an at all bad job of them. Glad you
like the incised stone & the knife — I too
like the look of that. And that one called
Tir y Blaenau — facing page 32, has come
out remarkably well I thought. The bloody funny
thing is that when it's been photographed what
emerges has nothing at all like the feel of
the original — the dark lines come out leaving
a hollow flat looking hill without any feeling of
bulk, well, I had a pretty feeble photograph
of it &. as I especially wanted it in as it
has an immediate bearing on *The Sleeping Lord*
I said well, let's see what they make of it.
and by some fluke the reproduction is
much better than the photograph — so
you see, you just simply *never* know &
the curious thing is that the block-makers
& printers said to "Will. Cookson" "These photographs
on mat surfaces are going to be damn
difficult, what we like are photos on
very shiny surfaces." — whereas, in fact,
on the whole, those on mat surfaces
came out a lot better than those
on glossy surfaces — jolly odd, isn't it.

Yes, sorry Harman could not have
contributed, he was asked, but ~~was~~
very busy at that time & none too well
& as he'd just done that thing for the
Welsh B.B.C. lecture, he felt he couldn't

I see from the heading of yr letter that you have advanced in your acquaintance with the Goidelic Celtic
I wish I could pronounce it. Is that dot over the 'd' in 'Garrḋa' deliberate or an accident?
I ask only because an extremely nice Irishman who comes to cut my hair once a month & who knows
a good bit about Gaelic (I dont know *how* much) told me that one puts a dot sometimes over
letters in words which are not to be pronounced, or I may have got him wrong — yes, I think
I have, because he was telling me about Sean (I mean the name John) & how the same word
means also something quite different — I've forgotten what, if one puts a dot over one of the vowels.
We have interesting conversations ~~because~~ we compare such Welsh words as I may chance
to know & he tells me the Irish form & so very often they are the same word obviously, but
one would never guess, or not often, by the sound. So often words of common Celtic origin are
common also to both Irish & Welsh, but with a slight variation of vowel or consonant e.g.
the word *bun* (pronounced in Welsh 'bin') in *one* of the words for woman, maiden, sweetheart, etc.)
I take this to be the same as Irish *ban* or *bean* as in *Bean-sidhe*

or *crau*
word for 'sty' or
'fenced place', &
'fence'; Irish *cro*, 'fence',
'enclosure', & so on.
In Welsh *crau* rhymes
more or less with 'cry', but the
'[illegible]' sound of it, *crau* which
words rhyme with 'bough' – so whereas
I imagine to the sound of Irish cro and Welsh

(2)

manage another piece at that moment. As a matter of fact he is going to write a review of the little book for *The Tablet* which he could not have done had he contributed to the collection. Dear old Bernard W. is writing an article about it for the ~~T~~ T. L. Sup. which I'm very glad ~~and~~ to hear.

Sometime, when you have time, I should like to know what you think of Stuart Piggott's contribution. I think it is much the best of the lot, that was my opinion as soon as I'd read it & to my pleasure, Saunders L. rang me up from South Wales when he got his copy and said in that decisive way of his "Stuart Piggott's brief contribution is, in my opinion, by far the best." He said something to the effect that he was not comparing it with yours, which he's always thought absolutely on the target, but he meant that of the new bits, Stuart P's was the the one. And no sooner had I put down the 'phone from talking with Saunders, than Harman rang up to say ~~[illegible]~~ how pleased he was with the production and again he too thought that of the new contribution Stuart P's was much the best. I, personally, found it, Stuart's bit, such a relief from all this blasted 'art' & 'literary' criticism. I mean (again to recall Taplow) there's no 'beat about the bush', – very clear concise English, ~~[illegible]~~ that alone, I expect, makes me full of admiration, not to say envy (~~[illegible]~~, seeing what a hopeless meanderer I am in writing the simplest thing myself (& getting worse, I fear) – but aside from all that and trying to look at it quite objectively it does seem to me an ~~[illegible]~~ exceedingly straightforward comment from a rising ~~[illegible]~~ professional & able bloke (whose job as a professor of prehistoric archaeology at Edinburgh necessitates the most exacting task of ~~of~~ training students of archaeology & all which that entails) to have a freshness & also a warmth about it. I liked that ~~[illegible]~~ bit from the Greek geographer Hecateus about the circular temple dedicated to Apollo located in the British Isles, adorned with anathemata etc. (page 76).

He, Stuart P. chanced to be in London one day last week & kindly came over to see me (I had seen him once before, about five or more years ago) & he told me he had come upon this a bit back & was very tempted to write & tell me of it, but when he was invited to contribute to this *Agenda*, he decided to keep it until I should read it in his brief article. He's a terribly nice chap – & has that blessed gift of humour, which,

N.B.* How bloody silly of me, you do tell me in this letter – my mind is forgetful of everything nowadays as soon as I've read it.

I would love to know sometime* what you think of Louis Bonnerot's trans into French of *The Dream of Pte Clitus*. As you know I know no French, but I can see that it's a pretty literal rendering, and I was amused at the way round one has to say things in French compared with English. I noticed that (in the opening passage) when Clitus says that his mate Lugo had been killed as that it was ~~a stray~~ "a stray [that] got him," in French, Louis B. says 'arrow' (*flèche*) perhaps because in French you can't say a 'stray', but have to say a 'stray something' which rather surprised me, because (I should have thought that French soldiers would have had a word in the trenches for 'a stray' – but Louis Bonnerot would certainly know, for he was in 'my' war – in fact he was in that appalling Verdun holocaust. He's a jolly nice chap.

③

as we know is not always pronounced ~~[illegible]~~ among ~~[illegible]~~ scholars, professors etc — .

Then I like Nancy Sandars contribution very much. She's a remarkable woman — but I think I told you about her in a letter a bit back. She too has this exact, scholarly, specialist-study thing ~~but~~ combined with a strong apperception of the aesthetic whether in written or visual works and again a jolly nice sense of humour — she was e.g., highly amused by that bit in *The Sleeping Lord* about "Kallistratos loves Julia and so does Henben & so do I" (p.39) Henben by the way is an ~~[illegible]~~ authentic personal name in early Welsh literature, but means 'Old Head' and Kallistratos is the name of one of the three Celts (Galatians) serving with the Greek armies in ~~Egypt~~ Egypt who scratched on the wall of an Egyptian temple in ~~[illegible]~~ greek that thing I quote something from Henri Hubert's *Les Celtes* about the three privates off duty who scratted something about "We, [cant remember the other two names] & Kallistratos came here & caught a fox" — (they meant a jackal). She, Nancy S. also was amused by ~~[illegible]~~ the bit about Marcus Aurelius "much given to fine thoughts, high-flown principles etc" (on p. 41) in *The Sleeping Lord*.

By the way the ~~[illegible]~~ figure of our Lord on the Cross drawing facing page 49, is called in list of illustrations 'Tywysog Cariad' I meant to give the translation of that but forgot, it means ~~[illegible]~~ 'The Prince of Love'. In the actual sketch the superscription is 'Brenhin Cariad' it should have been 'Brenin (no 'h') Cariad'. A King is a *Brenin*, a queen is a *Brenhines* & I suppose I got muddled up. & *no wonder*, for the plural of king, *Brenin* is *Brenhinedd* or *Brenhinoedd* whereas ~~[illegible]~~ ~~[illegible]~~ queen (*Brenhines*) is *Breninesau* in the plural ('no *h*'). They also use for King (among the various other words) *Rhi* same as the Irish *Rí* which I use on page 31, "the shape-shifting Rhi of Arfon"

The reason why I changed the title from *Brenin Cariad* to *Tywysog Cariad* is that while I had always thought of that unfinished drawing as being called

P.S. Forgive this appalling long & illegible letter — not read it through so heaven knows what nonsense it contains, or what ludicrous misspellings ~~&~~ hiatuses. I'm getting alarmed about the latter, for I *constantly* now leave out words that alter the meaning of the whole sentence. — it's worrying.

'the King of Love' & took it for granted that the Welsh for that ~~[illegible]~~ could only be Brenin Cariad (which is quite right) I thought to be, absolutely sure that it was idiomatic Welsh I 'phoned up Elri (Valerie) because though she's not learnéd she has an instinctual sense of what's good idiomatic Welsh – it being her natal tongue ~~[illegible]~~ (she knew no English until she was about seven or six) but she did after leaving some elementary school go on to some high school, where apart from English you had to take another language & the choice was between French or Welsh (I mean Welsh as a literary language ~~[illegible]~~ & she chose Welsh – most of her girl friends chose French because they said or thought they 'knew' Welsh anyhow) so that she has, ~~if~~ not a learnéd scholastic, academic grasp of the language, a thorough idiomatic grasp. Anyway, when I asked her on 'phone if Brenin Cariad was O.K. for 'King of Love' she said with some hesitation 'well yes, it's grammatically alright, but for some reason doesn't *feel* right – but she said I can't explain why, only that to me, ~~[illegible]~~ for some unknown reason, it does not give the feeling in respect to the Crucifixion that 'King of Love' does in English – ~~but~~, she said, don't bother about that – that's only what I feel; it's perfectly correct Welsh in itself ~~[illegible]~~. But I was worried about this, because I felt there *must* be some interior reason, which she could not express, for her feeling that. So I 'phoned up Saunders, and he said, "Well, it's perfectly alright, but let me sleep on it & I'll 'phone you to-morrow, it may be that Valerie has an instinctual feeling that brenin does not in some way, & this connection, convey the ~~[illegible]~~ appropriate idea as 'king' does in English. Next day, true to his word, he phoned & said "I think, probably, what Valerie was feeling was that Brenin did not ~~[illegible]~~ get ~~the~~ 'youthful' thing [Þa geong hæleð þaet wæs God Ælmihtig ~~of the~~ Dream of the Rood or Dr Watt's ~~that~~ "young Prince of Glory"] and I suggest Tywysog Cariad, because 'Prince' does evoke a youthfulness." So I called it Tywysog ~~[illegible]~~ Cariad.*

Lord! at ~~bo~~ bottom of second sheet of foolscap already & scarcely began to

→ c = k; a = 'a' in apple; r = 'r' in 'raid'; i = ee in 'reed'; ad = 'ad' in 'foot-pad'
The stress accent strongly on ys in Tywysog & on first syllable of Cáriad
So that the resultant sound is rather like teur-úss-og ká-ree-ad
short pure vowel 'a'
'eh' I suppose gives it best.

but said quickly Tywysog sounds almost more like tu-worse-og. In fact short of using a complex apparatus of phonetic signs one can't do it properly – & then the thing would ~~look~~ like a text-book or some sort – & still not convey much to most readers. Of course, supposing French was as unfamiliar to most chaps as is Welsh it would be bloody hard to ~~[illegible]~~ indicate in a few words how Paris or Marseilles was pronounced by a Frenchman, unless one heard it.

* pronounce approximately – and this is a very difficult one to roughly indicate, especially Tywysog: in fact I think the only way is to give the letters separately
t = t; y = 'y' in ~~[illegible]~~ 'wyn';
w = oo; y = u in funny;
s = 's' in 'soft'; o = o in 'hog';

⑤

answered your letter – owing to these meanderings. Shall have to write again later, & want to get this posted – meant indeed to post it last night, but messed it up by talking a lot of balls on second sheet which I then tore up, & started afresh – I'm always doing this with letters now – I think I shall have to get much thinner paper & write on one side only, then one has only to discard one sheet.

The aforesaid balls was a complex lot of stuff about 'influences' – I ~~[illegible]~~ was trying to answer your question as to what I myself felt touching the ~~[illegible]~~ averred Joycean 'influence' – as you say only I can really know about that, but though that's absolutely true, I find it virtually impossible to state – mainly owing to ~~the~~ certain things which, ~~to put in a way~~ ~~shorthand~~ to use ~~a~~ convenient shorthand terms 'informed' the materia which Joyce used & was part of, & which I in my own way am part of – I mean (again a shorthand term) ~~[illegible]~~ the Celtic thing and the Catholic thing as they come into conjunction ~~is~~ (or stand in relationship) to, the contemporary civilisational thing. There is a connection, but short of an insufferably long rigmarole I could not 'with my hand on my heart' as dear Eric used to say, state it – & indeed perhaps, not then. But I wholly agree with what you say of that ~~[illegible]~~ 'influence' (and other supposed 'influences') particular with regard I.P. & especially with regard to the use or application of such influences even if we grant, for the sake of argument, that they existed.* This is, as a matter of fact, true also of the Ana. & subsequent stuff. Some~~one~~one, the other day, said to me something to the effect that in

* and they do exist, but not in the ~~the~~ sense in which the critics & so mean – it's much more complex than that. and more as you suggest in your letter.

To continue the business of 'influences', I think David Blamires analysis 'Kinge Arthur ys nat dede' falls into quite a different category – for there is a detailed examination of Malory's direct 'influence' on particularly I.P. & it's very exact & proven. It amused me a good bit, actually, for I don't think I had realized how much in all sorts of connections, Malory or something Malorian was utilized. I was amused by the bit about "so on the morn Elias the Captain came" – it's perfectly true that that was deliberate from a passage in Malory, but, of course, what David B. could not know was that our Captain & Adjutant was ~~[illegible]~~ surnamed Elias, I can't remember his Xtian name, but I can see him very clearly still, he wore very thick spectacles I remember, & he was a very calm and efficient Welshman & he jolly well did 'come on that morn' to see that each Company commander was doing whatever had to be done.

SPECTICLES

(6)

I.P. ~~he~~ supposed I had deeply studied ~~[illegible]~~ the technique used in Ulysses, ~~[illegible]~~ that this indeed was evident in the switch from observed concrete outward actions & things, to the interior 'dream-like' colloquies of the characters. ~~He~~ I told him that I had not read Ulysses, either before, during or since writing In Paren. & that I still have not read it; which is no doubt regrettable, but true. The chap I was talking to was obviously very astonished. He then said, Well, what have you read of Joyce? or what had you read before or during the writing of I.P.? To which I had to reply well, practically nothing before writing I.P. but ~~but~~ at some date, I can't recollect when, you (René) had read aloud to Joan & myself some part of that separately published bit of Anna Livia – but ~~that~~ was certainly after 1928 but may have been round about 1930 – can't recall. From time to time since 1948 *I've struggled with bits of Finnegans Wake and though it's taken me always some hours to 'understand' any given paragraph I've always found it it astounding in ~~its~~ the many, many, facetted evocations of each word or group of words & usually, or very often, gloriously amusing into the bargain. not to mention the very great pulchritude shining out from the juxtaposed forms ('what ho! how does it go? 'splendour of truth' said somebody or other (Keats?), 'splendor ordinis' said some other bloke, but ~~[illegible]~~ 'splendor formae' says ~~[illegible]~~ the Angelic Doctor) But as for the usual talk of 'influences', hell's bells, it's boring. It seems to be a 'built-in' & ingredient part of all 'art' & 'literary' criticism, an inevitable starting point: "Mr X is quite evidently very much influenced by ~~[illegible]~~ A, B, Q & Y, but none the less ... & so on.' It's boring mainly because it's either as ~~[illegible]~~ obvious as saying that from 'interior evidence' or some such expression, Milton was familiar with the ~~[illegible]~~ metric of Greek & Roman poets or that Dryden or Chaucer could not have written Moby Dick. Or it's irritating by its assumptions that may seem ~~[illegible]~~ likely but which chance not to be, in fact, true, or not true in the sense meant by the critic or appreciator. For example I can see why a critic might suppose that in I.P. the author had employed a certain ~~[illegible]~~ arrangement of words on the page breaks in line, etc, etc, & that this showed clearly the 'influence' of Ezra P. — that happens not to be true, if only for the reason that I had not read any of Ezra's poetry at that period, though I had read some writing of his on Social Credit & Co & also I think, before 1930, his book on Provençal poetry – can't recall its title. But all this is tedious & not worth talking about. What one can't seem to get people to understand is that at a given time in a given civilisation various chaps, of small consequence or of great consequence are extremely likely to try & solve certain problems in the arts in something of the same way, whether they know of each other or not. There is the somewhat ~~different~~ different thing of two chaps employing the same 'content', because unknown to each other they shared a common experience, e.g. somewhere in I.P. I speak of men in the trenches of the La Bassée area hearing the more or less continuous rumble of gunfire twenty miles north, in the Ypres Salient. In a very early review of I.P. (which I came upon only the other day) the reviewer, wholly favourable, remarks that a poem by Wilfred Owen written during the war, uses virtually identical words as those of mine & the 'influence' is left for the reader to judge. Now I had not (probably to my shame) read a line of Owen's poetry. But the explanation is simple enough. Scarcely a day would pass in those trenches without someone saying: 'He's at it again ~~up~~ Ypres way,' or 'There seems to be a war on, up north,'* or 'not our Front, mate, anyhow!' Well no more room much Love to you René & Joan & Rosalind. Dai.

* You know, it was rather as much to be expected as when at Pigotts one of us would say: 'Seen Laurie to-day?' and get the answer, 'Yes just now actually; he got on to mules, that's why I'm late.'

But only from time to time & casually not much. And during the actual writing of the Anathemata I deliberately did not read either Joyce or Pound or other 'contemporary' writers – for one thing I had such a lot of other stuff 'sources' etc to check up on: might have been Welsh stuff, or Caesar or Gregory of Nyssa or what not.